DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 280 542 JC 870 184

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TITLE From Darkness into Light: A Group Process Approach to the Research Paper.
PUB DATE 83
NOTE 24p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Viewpoints (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS College Freshmen; Community Colleges; *Freshman Composition; Grading; Group Activities; *Group Dynamics; Prewriting; *Research Papers (Students); Student Research; *Teaching Methods; Two Year Colleges; *Writing Instruction; Writing Processes
IDENTIFIERS El Paso Community College TX; *Group Process Approach

ABSTRACT

A description is provided of the use of a group process approach to the Freshman English research paper at El Paso Community College. After highlighting problems associated with traditional approaches to freshman research papers, an overview of the group process approach is provided, along with warnings for instructors who might view the approach as a way to reduce their grading load and a rationale for the approach based on its appropriateness to the learning styles of community college students. Next, the model is described in terms of three stages in the writing process: (1) the pre-writing stage, involving topic selection by students; group formation based on results of assessment of writing skills and personality types; discussions of the rationale for the group approach, group dynamics, group learning theories, and methods of resolving problems within the group; and preliminary readings; (2) the writing stage, which involves the formulation of the thesis statement, construction of the working outline, writing of an assigned section of the paper by each student; and (3) the postwriting stage, which involves peer editing of rough drafts and grading based on assessment of the paper as a whole, of the student's own section, and of the student's peers' evaluation of his/her performance. The paper concludes with an annotated bibliography of works on the group process approach. (EJV)

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FROM DARKNESS INTO LIGHT:

A GROUP PROCESS APPROACH TO THE RESEARCH PAPER

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FROM DARKNESS INTO LIGHT:
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Glenn Spiegelhalder

The Freshman English research paper stubbornly remains one of the most unpopular rites of passage experienced by every new generation of college students. Despite our most enlightened efforts to understand the writing process and to ameliorate the fear and trembling inherent in it, tens of thousands of freshmen still set out alone every semester, venturing into unfamiliar territory in quest of that elusive beast called the research paper. They must survive an ordeal lasting months and return with an acceptable trophy of the hunt dripping on the end of their pens. The sad part of this saga is that many of them fail to return at all, and others are doomed to repeat this primitive ritual time and again before acquiring the skills required to capture the quarry. I remember one student who repeated the research paper course three times before she was able to complete the task; I suspect she may have liked the instructor because I was presented with a birthday cake the last time around--but I would have preferred the paper in the first semester to the cake in the third.

The research paper has always been a formidable obstacle to our students, and even some of our instructors elect the vicissitudes of basic English over the uncertainties of the research course whenever there is any choice in the matter. Of the three courses in our freshman curriculum (Basic English, Expository Writing, and Research and Critical Writing) the attrition rate has been disproportionately high in the third course which includes the research paper and the introduction to the critical analysis of literature. It is not unusual to find a class that has lost half of its members by the end of the semester, almost always because the research paper

was not completed. Over the last ten years we have purchased a wide variety of audio-visual materials on the research paper, we have designed any number of sophisticated library orientations, and we even published our own text (an individualized approach to the research paper which presumed to guide the student through the process from start to finish). These efforts seemed to be in touch with the times, yet the basic pattern of instruction remained the same--and so did the attrition rates. Then, about four years ago, I learned that one of my colleagues, Helen Bonner, had been using group activities extensively in her teaching and was experimenting with a group process approach to the research paper.

Although I had been using small discussion groups successfully, I had not tried much in the way of group writing; in fact, I had recently evaluated one instructor whose expository writing class was engaged in group editing, and I had not been impressed with the near chaos which I had observed. Nevertheless, I decided to look into the group research paper idea and decide if it were worth attempting. I had several discussions with Helen and was encouraged by her enthusiasm for the process. These conversations proved invaluable when I launched my own groups the following semester, for I went into the forest with my eyes open and with a general map of the territory in hand.

Two large themes dominated her observations about the group process, and I soon discovered that these were quite well-founded. I would, therefore, like to share them and to suggest that they may be viewed as general principles or ground rules underlying the technique. In the first place, she was convinced that an appreciation of group dynamics was critically important. The students must have some understanding of how groups interact, and the instructors must be able to construct a framework which allows the group to

assume responsibility for their own progress. For example, group members should be able to resolve most of their problems without relying on constant intervention by the teacher. I would recommend studying a book such as Burgoon, Heston and McCroskey's Small Group Communication: A Functional Approach (see bibliography) which includes an extensive bibliography for further reading as well as an appendix describing methods for evaluating group interaction. The other conviction my colleague held was that the process was not perfect; indeed, there were certain disadvantages inherent to the system. The advantages, however, were substantial and seemed to demostrate methodological superiority over the conventional approach.

My purpose here is to present a model, based on my own experience, which I hope will prove useful to the teacher who has experienced the frustrations of the traditional research paper and who would like to experiment with an alternate method. I shall presently attempt to describe the process in sufficient detail, but first I think it's important to elaborate a theoretical base on which the group method may be defended. This is necessary because I have observed that many teachers who have come to me, anxious to implement the group research paper, were interested in the process for the wrong reason--and this relates to one of the particular problems that, lacking a theoretical base, I was initially unprepared to deal with effectively.

The practical application of the group process evolved in response to a continuing increase in the number of students allowed in each section of the research writing course. The average class size five years ago had been between twenty to twenty-five students--now most classes begin with thirty to thirty-five students. My colleague had indicated that she was concerned about this trend, and she believed that it seriously impaired the instructor's ability to provide the necessary individual attention thoughout the course of a project as complex and as intimidating as the research paper. I shared this concern,

and thus my initial interest in the group process may be described as practical rather than theoretical. I really had no reason to be dissatisfied with my conventional methodology, for my attrition rate was not excessive and most of my students were achieving the course objectives. My success, however, was the result of intensive work with my students, spending many hours with them in the classroom, many days with them in the library, and many weeks with them in continuous conferences during which we reviewed rough drafts. As the size of the classes expanded, this kind of intensive effort was rapidly reaching the point of physical impossibility.

Now, the unsuspected problem to which I have referred--if you have not already guessed--turned out to be suspicion on the part of some colleagues and some administrators that those little groups in your classroom had been created for the sole purpose of avoiding the backbreaking, mindnumbing chore of grading all of those papers at the end of the term. This was obviously the motive of some of the teachers who later approached me on the subject -- which is why I have said that some teachers are interested in the process for the wrong reason. If, however, the teacher is committed to enhancing the learning experience through the use of the group process, the amount of work is in no way reduced; it is simply refocused and rechanneled into more time-effective patterns of work. The teacher who anticipates that the small group approach will provide a "quick fix" for the research paper blues is likely to be bitterly disappointed. For example, the convenient ten-step research paper ladder must be replaced by a new experimental prototype which needs constant fine tuning and thus becomes challenging for even the most resourceful teacher. In fact, I have observed that is is not unusual for some teachers to abandon the group method and seek comfortable refuge in the more familiar traditional approach.

For those who persevere, success may even prove something of an embar-

rassment. One of my early experiences with the group paper was with a summer session class, and a shocking 100% of the students finished the course; if this were not bad enough, I also had to give more A's than is decent--but the truth is, they earned them. Thus, in practical terms, the group method can often be justified on the basis of positive results. This defense may seem impressive at first, but does not go deep enough, for there remains the lurking suspicion that the teacher has been practicing some form of legerdemain and that the method may be pedagogically unsound. Fortunately, I was to discover a very simple yet substantial theoretical basis which seems to adequately explain why the group research paper works so surprisingly well.

Shortly after my first experience with the group process, I was enrolled in a class offered to our faculty by Dayton A. Roberts of the Higher Education Department at Texas Tech University. The course was College Teaching, and the primary emphasis was on the recognition of student learning styles. Dr. Roberts' research in this area is based on data collected through administering the Myers-Briggs Personality Type Indicator (MBTI) to a large sampling of faculty and students, particularly in community colleges. In his article "Personalizing the Learning Process" (Revista/Review Interamericana 7:1, 139-143), Roberts describes the MBTI as follows:

> The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is a self-administered 166 item self-validating instrument published in 1962 by the Educational Testing Service. The MBTI and the supporting research stemming from its development expanded and clarified Jung's theory that seemingly chance variation in human behavior is in fact not due to change; it is the logical result of observable and measurable differences in mental functioning (p. 140).

This essay contains much interesting information on learning styles, but for

our purposes here it is sufficient to note that Roberts' research uses Jungian personality types and his results point to a divergence between faculty and student personality-type distribution:

> This disparity of personality-type distribution between faculty and community college students is typical throughout the nation; it indicates that a preponderance of intuitive (N) types are teaching mostly sensing (S) types in our community colleges. Sensing types do not hear and experience things in the same manner as intuitive types see and hear and experience things. The higher the sensing (S) score or the higher the intuitive (N) score, the more pronounced these differences in perceiving become. Because of these differences, sensing (S) types will not prefer the same teaching and learning styles as intuitive (N) types (p. 142).

In the verbal disciplines, such as English and Speech, Roberts found that 70%-80% of the faculty were indeed intuitive types. The intuitive trait appears on his MBTI Type Table (p. 141) as a characteristic of introversion; Americans, MBTI results suggest, are 75% extroverted and 25% introverted--and the same distribution applies to students in open-door institutions on a nationwide basis.

I felt like St. Paul on the road to Damascus; this revelation opened my eyes, I could clearly see why our traditional approach to teaching the research paper so frequently proved ineffective and even threatening for a vast number of students. We were not only teaching them an activity inimicable to their personality types, but we were also employing methods alien to their preferred learning styles! When I read a short report that Helen Bonner has written

describing her experiences with the group research paper, I was impressed by the fact that her findings paralleled Roberts' percentages for extroversion and introversion in the student population:

> I have taught the group research paper for three semesters, getting student feedback at the end of each semester. About 75% of the class is always highly in favor of that method, saying they learn from each other, get to know each other, get more excited about the project and feel more confident in themselves. There is always a strong 25% who feel held back by slower members. These are often "A" students who are more comfortable working alone. Perhaps they will find later their group experience was valuable, or perhaps there needs to be a more immediate way to compensate them for their help.

I have further concluded that there is also a probable cultural bias inherent in the conventional research paper methodology. This possibility occurred to me when Professor Roseann Gonzalez, Director of the University of Arizona's M.A. in E.S.L. Program, spoke to the 1982 Southern Arizona Writing Project (SAWP) in which I was participating. She made the observation that Mexican-American students respond well to group activities because their is a strongly communal culture--and a library, for example, was likely to be a particularly alien environment. At El Paso Community College about two thirds of our students are Hispanic, and I suspect that another reason for the success of the group research paper is certainly the fact that it is more compatible with their cultural milieu. Nor is this insight limited to the Hispanic student, for I have found that Thom Hawkins (Group Inquiry Tech-

niques for Teaching Writing) reports Betty Rizzo's success using peer teaching at the City College of New York to "disadvantaged students from New York. City ghetto". Hawkins concludes that "structured peer group interaction has important implications for the teaching of standard English composition to speakers of nonstandard English" (p. 7). Finally, the SAWP workshop was also addressed by Brenda Even of the Adlerian Psychological Institute, and she shared three observations regarding adult learning; the first of these was that adults enjoy small group activities, and the second was they hate to waste time. Many of today's college students are, of course, adults, and I have noted that they function extremely well in the group context. One of their obvious contributions is keeping the discussion on the subject, for they have learned the importance of using time efficiently.

I would prefer to consider the process itself, my model, in terms of three stages in the writing process rather than using an "X"-number-of-steps approach. I have always found the "steps" troublesome because, in the first place, they sometimes overlap, and, in the second place, they are artificial--treating the research process as if it were a layer cake that can only be produced by following an exacting recipe. The "steps" are still very much in evidence, but they are now embodied in a more fluid contex. I believe this is one aspect of the process for which the individual teacher should devise his or her own pattern of presentation--and the groups inveterately develop their own modi operandi for the application of this information anyway.

In the beginning there is still the topic, and student participation in topic selection is highly desirable. Richard Gebhardt discusses the value of such student involvement in his College English article "Teamwork and Feedback: Broadening the Base of Collaborative Writing". Our course is overcrowded with content--we must produce a research paper and also prepare the students for critical writing in the sophomore literature courses--and therefore I begin

the process of topic selection almost immediately, before the groups have even been formed. The students are asked to bring a list of three to five subjects that they would genuinely enjoy studying in some depth. Then, during the next class meeting, each student makes a selection from his or her list and explains to the class why the subject would be an interesting topic for research and writing.

This procedure provides a natural forum for the consideration of what constitutes a good topic for a research paper. If the topic is to broad, too limited, too controversial--or is any of the taboos to be found in every textbook--I can readily explain the problem using a live example. No freeze dried specimens need be dissected. Sometimes the topics can be saved by restriction or expansion, and the rationale as well as the technique involved in either case may be explained using live bait. If the topic, for some reason, proves completely unacceptable, the student generally has another one in reserve that will prove satisfactory. The goal is to allow each class member to generate at least one promising topic, and these are listed on the board as the process is being accomplished.

The next task is to reduce the list of topics to those which have the broadest appeal to the class as a whole. In this democratic procedure, each student may vote as often as he or she likes as we go down the list, but they are cautioned not to vote for any that they would not personally enjoy working with for an extended period of time. The net result of this activity should be a manageable list of appropriate topics for a good research paper.

The formation of the groups is another early activity of the pre-writing situation. Aside from the final evaluation, this may be one of the slipperiest parts of the process and should be approached with caution. The literature on group processing describes many of the possibilities for dealing with this delicate matter--but is bereft of any consensus. Mary K. Healy

briefly alludes to the more common strategies in Using Student Writing Response Groups in the Classroom (p. 8) and then lamely admits she has abandoned them all; now she just tells the students to "get into groups". This is a good formula for disaster when it comes to writing the research paper collaboratively. She allows that her results are sometimes "messy", and I am convinced that any random method is likely to prove inappropriate for a successful group project as extended and as complex as a research paper.

My own system has evolved to the point where I have settled on two general criteria for determining group membership: writing skills and personality types. A diagnostic writing sample from the first class meeting and the results from a short-form personality-type indicator are my sources of information. In the first category, I am concerned with identifying the more advanced writers and ensuring that they are distributed among the groups; in the latter category I am interested in achieving some balance between personality types within each group. In 1982-83 I tried an instrument that Dr. Shirley Caskey is using at El Paso Community College to study student learning styles. The results of this assessment indicated whether a student is field-dependent or field-independent and allowed me to predict which students were likely to be strong influences on group interaction and which students were likely to defer to others in this respect. I will not presume to endorse a particular form of testing and imply that such is a necessary component of the system. I do advocate, however, compiling a multifaceted profile which will replace guesswork with deliberate method. Colleagues with backgrounds in counseling have suggested to me that a variety of readily available assessment instruments might prove useful for my purposes, so I would recommend working with a counselor to identify a test which is accessible and appropriate. These tests also have ancillary advantages in that they help students deal with self-concept adjustments, and they "personalize the learning process" by establishing--

from the outset-a humanistic rather than a turgid academic climate for the research paper assignment.

All of the data on topic preferences (from a final list of about eight subjects the student indicates three in order of preference), writing skills (scored holistically), and personality type or learning style is recorded on 3x5 cards on which the students have provided personal information at the first class meeting. These cards can be spread out and arranged and rearranged as I agonize and compromise over the ideal membership for each group. Eventually, I hope that it will be possible to expedite and refine this procedure by using my own computer.

The optimum group size, as reported in the literature and based on my own experience, is five to six students; this allows for an equitable distribution of the workload and also provides a group large enough to absorb the loss of one or even two members.

While all of the foregoing activities have been taking place, I have, from the first class meeting, been discussing the rationale for the group approach and exploring a few ideas related to group dynamics and group learning theories. For example, we consider ways in which teamwork and committee work are a reflection of social situations and are, in fact, responsible for much of the work routinely accomplished in a typical job experience. Thom Hawkins refers to this value in Group Learning Techniques, observing that "the small peer group provides a close approximation to the way communication takes place out in the real world..." (p.5). I point out that failure to work well withothers has been identified as the leading cause for being fired from a job, and good interpersonal relationships and effective communication skills appear to be the primary factors to which promotion and career advancement are attributed.

During the course of these discussions, we cover techniques for solving problems within the group framework, and I alert them to some of the difficulties

they are likely to encounter. The most serious of these is that some students may, at times, feel that they are shouldering an unfair amount of responsibility for the group's progress. These will usually be the intuitive types who are more comfortable with reading and writing--that 25% to whom Helen Bonner referred. I point out that it is natural in any group situaton for some members to assume leadership roles, and I suggest that if they find themselves in such a position now, it will probably keep on happening to them throughout their careers--and that the present context is a good opportunity to practice leadership skills. I should note that I do not appoint leaders or have groups elect or select leaders; this is usually futile and is quite unnecessary because the groups develop their own personalities and structures through a kind of "natural selection". I do, on occasion, suggest to some groups that they allow a member with obviously superior composition skills to assume an editorial function as group responsibilities are defined.

My cautionary remarks notwithstanding, the fact remains that some groups will still try to impose upon a member who they sense will be able to produce results for them--that is, a good grade for the group. Thom Hawkins compares the teacher's role in a group situation to the presence of a ghost. In other words, the teacher should generally be able to move about the room, from group to group, without visibly altering the work in progress. In the situation I have been describing, the time has come for the ghost to appear on the ramparts and discreetly suggest that there is something rotten in the state of Denmark.

The only serious student complaints that I have ever received concerning the group research paper have been the result of just this type of circumstance. This situation occurred the first time I used the group approach and involved a talented young woman in a group with four otiose young men. Such is the consequence of an unfavorable combination of group members (despite my careful calculations, which do not address imponderables like attitude and ambition),

and since then I have found it wise to also consider the balance between males and females as a contributing factor to my assignment criteria. Thus far, I have put about thirty groups through the process, and this particular defect has recurred about three times, about one group in ten; I find this to be an acceptable factor of risk. I should add that I make it clear, at the very beginning, that no one in the class is compelled to participate in the group process, and once in a while one or two students do choose to work alone. Also, there have been instances in which two students with a common interest have asked to work as a team, and this generally proves satisfactory.

The last phase of the pre-writing is the "step" often referred to as preliminary reading our research. Each student in the group finds one background source on the topic, preferably in a periodical, and summarizes the contents. Library orientations and related tasks are accomplished during this phase which typically lasts about one week. The groups then synthesize their findings and prepare a ten-minute oral presentation for the class in which they introduce their subject and discuss the purpose of the paper they envision writing. The class responds with questions--they have been primed for this and have been told that the better the questions the more likely I will abstain from the inquisition. I consider this activity to be significant because it serves to provide an early sense of audience awareness. In other words, questioning represents the reaction of the common reader, and the subsequent framing of the thesis statement and working outline can then reflect what an actual audience wants to know.

The writing stage commences with the formulation of the thesis statement. I lecture briefly on the subject and proved a number of examples from previous papers. The groups may choose their own approach to writing the thesis, but I suggest that each member write one statement that reflects the purpose of the paper as they perceive it. When these are examined by the groups, some will

find one in particular that they like and decide to "go for it". Other groups will decide to combine parts of several individual statements to produce a thesis on which they all agree. Koch and Brazil's Strategies for Teaching the Composition Process includes a section on group thesis statements, and it merits examination by a teacher new to this idea. One of the prerogatives from the dark ages that I insist on preserving, in this busy democracy of the small group, is the right to pass final judgement on thesis statements. I see no point in letting the process run aground because the purpose of the paper has not been clearly defined.

The construction of a working outline is the next procedure, and the groups then assign sections of the outline to each member to research. In most instances,there is much overlapping information in their sources, and a lively exchange of notecards and xerox copies is likely to ensue. The individual student is finally responsible for writing up his or her portion of the paper, but a great deal of collaborative writing may--and should--take place. As Richard Gebhardt points out in "Teamwork and Feedback: Broadening the Base of Collaborative Writing," collaboration is frequently viewed as an editorial process, reserved for "peer editing" at the end of the writing activity. Certainly, such an editorial function is highly appropriate in the case of the group research paper, for final editing is one of the procedures handled so woefully in the conventional approach where each student throws together a paper at the last minute. However, the sharing of writing in progress--such as Peter Elbow describes in Writing With Power--can be a productive way to solve writing problems and generate ideas as the student works through his or her material and begins to organize and write. The context of sharing is also important for the group paper because it will assist in achieving cohesion and consistency among the sections by different authors. The shared writing of transitional sentences is particularly important, and some groups choose

to collaborate for the writing of the paper's introduction and conclusion.

The editing function properly belongs to the postwriting state. Peer editing begins with an exchange of rough drafts and concludes with the proofreading of the final document. I continue to find that reading rough drafts is a worthwhile enterprise on my part, and I offer to do so when the group editing is finished. As of this past year, however, I now insist on typed copy because this usually necessitates a further draft which enhances readability, reduces minor errors, and approximates the final product. The groups adopt differing ways of getting the final paper typed and compiling the notes and the bibliography. These are the kinds of problems which the group should be able to solve without my help. As far as the typing is concerned, some groups arrange to have it done by an outside typist--just as students working on their own frequently do. Other groups are fortunate enough to have a typist in their midst who can be convinced to volunteer, and some groups decide each member will type his or her section, dividing the front and back matter equally among the members. The page on which the outline appears, in any case, will indicate which student is responsible for each portion of the paper. The ultimate scenario, of course, will be groups of students networking from their home computers and transmitting drafts and final copy to the instructor's terminal printer.

Evaluation is another sensitive matter that the teacher will find challenging. Like the determination of group membership, any number of systems may prove effective if they are carefully planned and well-structured. In most small group situations, some form of self-evaluation is an efficacious means of providing feedback for both the group and the instructor. Checklists are extremely helpful and may be used throughout the activity as well as for final evaluation; Mary K. Healy and Thom Hawkins include examples of such checklists which might be used as models.

My own system produces three grades for each student, and the average of these equals the student's final grade in the course. I first grade the paper as a whole, using essentially the same approach I followed when the papers were produced individually; then, I assign another grade for the specific section of the paper written by each student. This is my contribution: one grade for the complete paper and one individual grade per student. In the meantime, the group members have evaluated themselves and each other on forms that I have provided. Thus, the third grade is generated by the students themselves through peer evaluations (the self-evaluation question is for my information only and is not included in the determination of the grade). There is also a space on this form for comments, and these are sometimes revealing insights into matters such as how fairly the work was distributed during the final stages of the process. I enter all of these results on another form I have designed and give this to the student. The form clearly shows every grade the student has received for the project--including those given by their peers (anonymously recorded, of course)--and the calculation of the final grade is included.

I have not been able to describe in detail every aspect of the process as I have used it, but I hope the pattern which has been adumbrated is adequate in terms of being a point of departure for any teacher seriously interested in the group research paper. I make some modifications to the system every time I use it, and some of these are recursive innovations that I try again after having experimented with a variant approach. For example, I sometimes begin with an arbitrary general topic area instead of allowing the students to find topics at random. I did this three years ago and then again last year when the college became involved in a project to collect and publish student writing on border-related issues. I began by putting the subject "The Border" on the board, and then we developed subtopical categories such as environment, culture, history, crime, politics, health, and transportation.

The next step was to brainstorm potential restricted topics that would refine each of these areas, and the students were asked to bring a list of three to five such topics that interested them to the next class meeting We then proceed as I have outlined earlier. This method has the advantage of focusing the students' interests immediately on a meaningful content area, and it also precludes dealing with some of the shopworn subjects they might otherwise suggest. In this instance, the borderlands topics had the added advantage of broadening the research base to include a rich variety of primary sources. I always make a point of encouraging personal interviews, and in this context they appeared in abundance on the final bibliographies.

About the time I began my experiments with the group process for the research paper, I assumed teaching responsibilities in our technical writing curriculum. In the fall of 1982 I decided to adapt the collaborative writing course. In this application the collaboration begins almost at once with the writing of a proposal for the project and continues to include a progress report (oral and written) and then the finished report. Although I do a diagnostic assignment--and sometimes a reading level, personality type, or learning style test--the groups are formed primarily along the lines of common degree plans, and the reports are written on subjects to their major fields (in which they must identify a real or realistic audience). The final report requires a sophisticated format with elements such as a letter of transmittal, an abstract, a table of contents, subject headings, graphics, and technical-style documentation. Many of the productions by individual writers in previous semesters were disappointing, but the group papers from the six classes in which I instituted the collaborative process showed marked improvements. The results in the technical writing course were even more impressive than those with the freshman research paper and revitalized my enthusiasm for the collaborative method.

The future of the research paper in English departments is uncertain. The writing across the curriculum movement, for example, may lead to the teaching of research in the students' own disciplines. For the moment, however, many of us will still be teaching the research paper, and I have two convictions which account for my interest in this particular endeavor. First, I believe that teaching research skills is more important than ever before. Our society is in the midst of what is being called an information revolution, and students must be able to acquire and implement this information in a purposeful manner. Albert Einstein once remarked that it was no longer possible to know everything, even in your own area of specialization; therefore, he said being able to find the answers to your questions was now just as important as what you actually know. Secondly, the conventional approach to the research paper has failed to motivate students to learn and to appreciate these very important research skills. As Stephen North points out in "Teaching Research Writing: Five Criteria," our traditional methods have proved inadequate and pedagogical reform has been long overdue. The time has come to bring the research process out of the darkness of the primitive initiation rite and into the light of our new understanding of the writing process.

Bibliography

The success of a group writing effort will be significantly influenced by the understanding of the process which the teacher has at his or her command, and those interested in pursuing this type of approach have two categories of resources which may be profitably explored before launching a group project such as a research paper. The first source of information is another teacher who has been able to produce results through the use of a similar strategy. My first experiences with the group research paper were influenced by my former colleague Helen Bonner, who suggested a preliminary structure and helped me to anticipate many of the problems that would inevitably arise. The second

category is comprised of the wide variety of information available in the literature concerning group writing, group dynamics, and the teaching of research writing itself. Although little or nothing has been published about writing the research paper using the group approach, most valuable literature exits on the group writng process, and the consensus in recent articles on the research paper is that conventional methodology is badly in need of reform. By exploring the sources which I have selected for this bibliography, the teacher contemplating a group research project will be better prepared to meet the challenges of revitalizing one of the most moribund areas of the English curriculum. I would have been most grateful for such a bibliography when I first attempted the task.

Boiarsky, Carolyn, "Group Processing: An Inside Look". Arizona English Bulletin, 23(1), pp. 96-101.

Takes the position that teachers and students must understand the complete process of "the mystical experience of group processing" and be certain of their respective roles if the activity is to produce results beyond the proofreading stage. Examines the dual role of the group member (writer and critic) and proposes a heuristic for determining if a piece of writing "works". Suggests the use of a checklist for establishing a rubric that may be applied to considerations such as grammer, syntax and style. Includes tables summarizing assumptions and logistics of group processing (as reported in the sources identified in her bibliography).

Burgoon, Michael; Heston, Judee K. and McCroskey, James, Small Group Communication: A Functional Approach. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1974.

Presents an overview of the dynamics of small group interaction and focuses on areas likely to be of interst to the teacher who desires a fuller understanding of the group process. Discusses the unique characteristics of a small group and the role of persuasion in a small group context. Covers topics such as

conflict resolution, decision making, leadership, and participation. Includes an extensive bibliography and an appendix which describes instruments for observing small group activity through the use of interaction analysis.

Gebhardt, Richard, "Teamwork and Feedback: Broadening the Base of Collaborative Writing". College English, 42(1), pp. 69-74.

Discusses the emotional dimension of collaborative writing as a neglected aspect of the process which should be harnessed in support of the technical and intellectual processes generally stressed. Suggests that fear and isolation inhibit the student from the start--and therefore collaboration at the end of the process is limited to an editorial function. Proposes that a collaborative writing strategy ought to be employed for (1) finding a topic, (2) generating content, and (3) focusing on an audience.

Hawkins, Thom, Group Inquiry Techniques for Teaching Writing. Urbana, Illinois: ERIC Clearing House on Reading and Communication Skills and NCTE, 1976.

Explores a group teaching model in terms of both theory and practice. Advocates a "parceled classroom" in which the inquiry (or discovery) method is combined with a group approach. Suggests that students can assume much of the responsibility for their own learning and that the teacher serve as a facilitator who questions, listens, and observes. Examines selected literature on the subject of the teachers's role in the group learning process and describes strategies for structuring groups, establishing interaction, and monitoring group progress. Includes a sample form for use in group self-evaluation and summarizes results from student responses to it.

Healy, Mary K., Using Student Writing Response Groups in the Classroom. Bay Area Writing Project Publications, No. 12. Berkeley: Bay Area Writing Project, 1980.

Describes a comprehensive system for implementing response groups and argues

that more fluent student writing is produced as a result. Advocates a gradual approach in which students are trained to recognize effective writing and to respond to it with specific observations. Suggests preliminary activities such as audio and video taping, student and class responses to selections to read aloud by the instructor. Provides useful examples of checklists used for self and teacher-evaluation of group effectiveness. Includes sections on group membership, physical arrangements in the classroom, and the teacher's role in monitoring group progress.

Koch, Carl and Brazil, James M., Strategies for Teaching the Composition Process. Urbana, Illinois: NCTE, 1978

Recognizes that students often feel uncomfortable about writing and that "nonstandard dialect speakers" in particular may feel inadequate. Develops 29 activities divided under four headings--The Comfort Zone (6), Pre-writing (12) The Writing Stage (5), and the Post-Writing Stage (6) -- and 22 of them are designated as group or group optional. Recommends 4-6 students for most exercises structured specifically for small groups. Includes strategies highly appropriate for the teaching of the research paper as a group process (e.g. Consensus Decision Making, A Long Writing Project, a Group Approach to Thesis Statements and Topic Sentences, and Peer Essay Reading). Contains two interesting appendices: (A) Setting Priorities for Diagnosing Student Writing and (B) Diagnosing Dialect Features in Student Writing.

McNabb, Scott E., "If Research Papers Must Be Taught". Arizona English Bulletin, 22, pp. 126-131

Proposes that the conventional approach to the research paper is lacking in "sense and purpose". Suggests that an overemphasis on correct form produces stilted, impersonal writing and denies the student a valuable learning experience focusing on the discovery process. Describes an approach to the research

paper based on four principles: (1) learning about the topic rather than form is emphasized, (2) helping students choose topics that interest them is stressed (3) pursuing the topic from an original point of view is advocated, and (4) separating documentation from the content during evaluation is recommended. Concludes that research papers can be taught utilizing the understanding of the writing process now applied to other written assignments.

North, Stephen, "Teaching Research Writing: Five Criteria". Freshman English News, 9(2), pp. 17-19.

Takes the position that research writing as it is conventionally taught is often futile and argues that our assumptions regarding teaching the research paper should be reconsidered. Describes five problem areas in the traditional method, the most serious of which is that it is "alien and even harmful to our students' developing composing processes". Suggests that new strategies to the teaching of research writing be evaluated on the basis of five criteria which include writing across the curriculum and making the research paper a "natural step in the students' writing development". Concludes that present methods are inadequate and that "pedagogical reform" has been long overdue.

"What to Look For in Groups". The 1972 Handbook for Group Facilitators. University Associates, 1972.

Identifies the two major ingredients of group interaction as content and process. Presents a 38-question heuristic for analyzing the process within groups and categorizes these under the headings of participation, styles of influence, group decision making procedures, task functions, maintenance functions, group atmosphere, membership, feelings and norms. Provides the group facilitator with specific factors useful in mointoring group performance and assisting with problem solution.

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MAY 15 1987